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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-28-2007

SPONSOR Duran LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Broaden Veterans' Scholarship Program, CA SB SJR 15

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	*NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to House Bill 270

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Resolution 15 carries no appropriation. Senate Joint Resolution 15 amends Article 9, Section 14 (b) of the New Mexico State Constitution such that provisions covering scholarship programs for veterans within the constitution will be extended to veterans serving during a time of declared war or an authorization to use force. Currently, the definition of veterans that the provision applies to be narrowly defined as Vietnam-era service members; specifying service in that country. Senate Joint Resolution 15 amends language throughout this section of the Constitution, to remove references to Vietnam.

RELATIONSHIP

Senate Joint Resolution 15 relates to House Bill 270, which carries no direct appropriation from the general fund. If enacted, the legislation would extend the Vietnam Veteran scholarship to include U.S. Military Veterans of the Gulf War. House Bill 270 amends Sections 21-21E-1 through 21-21E-2 NMSA 1978, Vietnam Veterans' Scholarship fund such that references to eligibility to the program is extended to Gulf War veterans, as well as making minor language changes to make the statute parallel with the current names of state agencies. House Bill 270 would extend to the fund's interest earnings and State appropriations the non-reverting

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provisions that now apply only to gifts, grants and donations. Finally, any distributions to Gulf War veterans could occur only from money placed into the fund after July 1st, 2007. Any fund balance existing prior to this effective date is reserved for Vietnam veterans.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The proposed constitutional amendment will extend eligibility for veteran scholarship programs to veterans serving during a time of declared war or an authorization to use force. However, there are currently no scholarship programs that apply to veterans other than Vietnam veterans. While enactment of House Bill 270 would extend this eligibility to Gulf War veterans, there are now no scholarships available to veterans from Gulf War or other armed conflicts or force protection authorizations. Current scholarship programs do not apply to those having served in other areas such as Korea, Somalia, Afghanistan or the Balkans, including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

PD/nt